

The Streets

Development initiatives should work towards enriching “street life” along the Fourth and Washington Street corridors within the CED. Developments should be encouraged to keep the ground floor open to the street (no blank walls) and to “advertise” the offerings in their buildings clearly, in an animated manner.

With all buildings built up to the sidewalks, the public right-of-way should also reflect the festive nature of an entertainment district. Initially this can be done with a simple “banner and benches” program that promotes key events and provides outdoor gathering places. Once the district has captured its market, more targeted improvements with a higher level of investment should be considered.

The intersection of Fourth and Washington Streets bears significance within the proposed entertainment district. The southwest corner is especially significant. The Commons has a history of hosting a wide variety of important, “milestone” events for the City of Columbus. Consideration should be given to recognizing this significance with improvements such as an appropriately scaled sculpture, a stronger sense of the space as a place to gather, and redefinition of the current architecture.

The intersection of Brown and Fourth Streets is a visual and functional terminus for the entertainment district. Several key anchors such as a hotel, theme restaurant, and shops are appropriate here. Consideration should be given for celebrating this clustering of venues with a gathering space and “animated” feature such as a fountain or tower.

Development Program

Initially, re-investment in Downtown should be primarily directed towards securing its role as a key area for amateur sports and recreation, learning and culture, living and shopping, and dining and entertainment. The Columbus Entertainment District will be an important catalyst for securing these roles for Downtown, with the introduction of a competitive amateur sports complex near downtown and in the greenest being developed in tandem.

Developing the CED will require differentiating the Fourth and Washington Street intersection (and its proximity to Mill Race Park) as a place that offers an experience only available in one place in the region. Emphasis should be placed on attracting diverse activities and venues that offer choices to residents as well as out of town visitors that keep them coming back again and again. This includes creating new places for recreation, cultural events, educational activities, dining, lifestyle retail and entertainment, as well as stabilizing existing venues. Subsequently, consideration should also be given to increasing quantity and quality of housing and reinforcing unique retail offerings in the CED. Public investment should be principally directed towards overall management of the redevelopment program through expansion of city-managed recreational spaces, addressing parking needs, and implementing right-of-way enhancements.

Mixed use development, which can include a mixture of residential, parking garages, and commercial space on the same property, are proposed throughout the CED as a means to re-establish the core of Downtown as an interesting place that is pedestrian friendly, constantly invigorating to be part of, and is economically vital. This approach applies to both new and existing property within the proposed CED.

Each of the eight and a half blocks within the Columbus Entertainment District plays a part in shaping an identity for this area. The development emphasis varies from west to east along Fourth Street. The six western blocks fronting Fourth Street are ready for redefinition. Reinforcement of retail and entertainment businesses is the principal strategy for the eastern two and a half blocks in the district.

The two of largest properties within the CED that are ready for redefinition include the Commons Mall (2 city blocks) and the Commons Mall Parking (about 2.5 city blocks). The Post Office property (1 city block) and the City Parking Lot (.5 city blocks) represent the balance of the property ready for redefinition.

As part of an overall strategy, the Commons Mall Parking located between Lindsay and Brown should be developed to serve as a transition between proposed Riverfront improvements, Mill Race Park, and the proposed mixed-use development along Fourth and Washington Streets. It also serves as an important visual and place defining terminus for Fourth Street. Flanked by the most significant traffic counts in Downtown, this six-acre site can bring to Downtown key uses that rely on these indicators and could benefit from surrounding recreational and entertainment activities.

The Commons Mall property has a two blocks frontage on Fourth Street, the western half of the three hundred blocks of Washington Street and benefits from high traffic counts on Brown Street. This development program calls for a two stage approach to reactivating this block. With an eventual overall redefinition of both these blocks in mind, interim development activities should focus incrementally, increasing this property’s role in an active and vital CED.

Fronting Fourth and Fifth Streets, the Post Office and City Parking Lot blocks have the opportunity to influence the further development of the contemporary architecture character of Fifth Street and play a role in activating the northern block faces of Fourth Street. Located between the Fourth and Washington Street intersection and the Commons Mall Parking property, these properties should sustain an energetic street and commercial mix.

The development program is organized around four development initiatives or tiers of activity. This development flow recognizes the phased nature of development and offers an incremental approach to activating the CED. The following summarize the character and expectations for each tier of development for the Columbus Entertainment District:

Tier 1 Develop Currently Underutilized Parking Lots Commons Mall Parking north of Fourth Street between Lindsay and Brown Streets and between Jackson Street and the alley to the east

During the first development tier for the CED, emphasis will be placed on the northern segment of the Commons Mall Parking, retaining the current parking and automotive center until the fourth development tier. This first tier will focus on attracting more visitors to Downtown through a hospitality oriented venue.

New development on the Commons Mall Parking north of Fourth Street as well as other development activities will require a re-definition of Downtown parking facilities. As part of the redefinition surface parking in the half block north of Fourth Street between Jackson Street and the alley should be converted to a parking structure (as recommended by several past downtown parking studies) that would serve the needs of employers and retail (e.g. Dell Brothers) or dining (e.g. Papa’s Deli) customers in the Fourth and Washington Street sub-district. The first level of the parking deck should include new dining, entertainment, and retail establishments.

For the blocks along Washington Street, reinforcement activities should be focused on supporting existing retail, encouraging the transition of first floor space from service to retail where possible, and introducing quality housing in underutilized upper floors.

Tier 2. Develop Mill Race Sports Complex

Development of the land across the river from Mill Race Park into championship-caliber playing fields for amateur sports would draw people into the Downtown, where they would find hotels, dining, entertainment, and retail opportunities nearby. Adjacency to these downtown services will make this type of development a unique project within the amateur sports market. Development of this area for sports fields suits the limitation defined by its tendency to flood. These improvements would also work towards furthering the Columbus' downtown gateway initiative along State Road 46 .

Tier 3. Redefine Current Post Office Block

Redefinition of this block from a single low traffic and low intensity use to a mixed-use development to include street level dining, entertainment, and retail businesses with high-quality housing above, will activate a key block within the entertainment district.

The Great Good Place

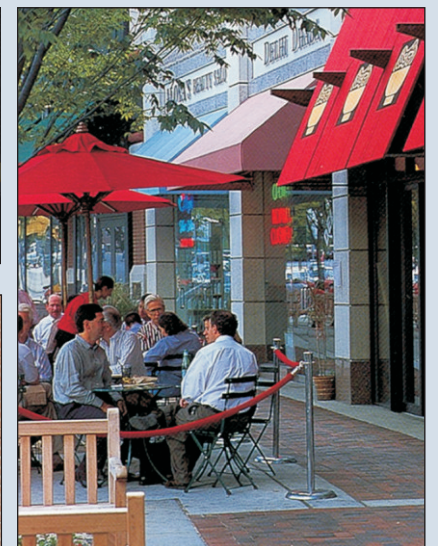
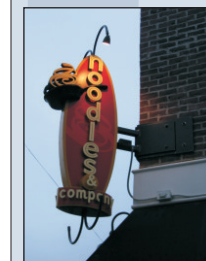
by Ray Oldenburg, 1999, New York: Marlowe and Company.
Reviewed by Jerry Kloby

One of the important ingredients in building community is a physical design that facilitates social interaction. It is difficult for people to develop the networks that are a crucial part of human social systems unless there are places for encounters to take place. Without casual regular encounters it is very difficult for all the other steps in community building to take place: discussion, organization, action, accomplishment, etc. Indeed, one of the main points that Benjamin Barber makes in A Place for Us is that enlarging and reinforcing public space is an important element in strengthening civil society.

These are the sorts of public spaces that The Great Good Place is about. Sociologist Ray Oldenburg refers to them as “third places”, the first two being home and the workplace. Third places are the core settings for informal public life, they are places where people can meet old friends, make new acquaintances, discuss the important issues of the day, and temporarily throw off the weight of the world that can drag them down. Oldenburg claims that involvement in informal public life has important psychological, social, and political implications, and such involvement is made possible by the existence of third places.

Some essential ingredients for successful third places include:

1. They must be relatively inexpensive to enter and to purchase food and drinks.
2. They must be highly accessible; ideally one should be able to get there by foot from work or one's home.
3. A number of people can be expected to be there on a daily basis.
4. All people should feel welcome; it should be easy to get into a conversation. A person who goes there should be able to find both old and new friends each time they visit.





Housing is important to making downtown an active and thriving place, particularly after normal business hours. As depicted in the CED Development Program, this plan calls for significant investment in downtown housing over the next 10 years. The adjacent images provide examples of potential multi-family housing, appropriate for this area of downtown.



Tier 4. Redefine Commons Mall and Commons Mall Parking south of Fourth Street between Lindsay and Brown Streets

Redefining this two-block retail site to include additional dining, entertainment, and lifestyle retail complimenting current offerings is critical to securing development momentum. With the exception of Sears, much of the retail space in this mall is vacant and those merchants still in the mall are struggling to maintain market share. This property also includes the Commons, a recognized community assembly space, two active movie theaters (Yes Cinema and Commons Cinema), and a new restaurant (Bistro 310), all of which would be enhanced by additional development within the Mall.

Concurrent with the redefinition of the Commons Mall, mixed use development on the southern segment of the Commons Mall Parking Lot will further activate downtown and complement the first tiers development of the northern segment of this block.

Project Phasing

The CED Development Program will be implemented in four tiers over a ten year period. The strongest market opportunities and critical market building projects have been incorporated into the first tiers. Quickly defining and activating the CED as the preferred entertainment destination in the region is goal of this phasing strategy. This includes attracting new venues and reinforcing the current inventory of venues. Consideration has been given to maintaining and improving parking facilities as an integral part of the each tier.

Tier 1. Immediate (1-3 years)

The projects that would create the highest and quickest return on immediate private- and public-sector investments and serve as an important catalyst for future development include:

- 1) Hotel - A 120-room hotel with 10,000 square feet of meeting space. This facility will be a pivotal link between Mill Race Park, Downtown offices, and the Columbus Entertainment District. This hotel will serve as a home base for amateur sports, business, and tourism visitors, offering them easy access to Downtown destinations.
- 2) Dining - 1-2 theme restaurants adjacent to the hotel as catalyst projects for expanding the dining options in Downtown.
- 3) Parking - In order to provide parking for this tier's venues and to create capacity for the future, replace the existing City surface lot with a multi-level parking garage for 370 cars. This garage will serve both Downtown customers and employees. About 15 to 20% of the spaces could be leased to surrounding employers to generate revenue for operating cost and retiring debt.
- 4) Commercial - Up to 15,000 square feet of new commercial on the first floor of the parking garage should front Fourth Street. Leasing for this space should target restaurants with unique menus or atmosphere, clubs or pubs that offer a mix of live music, food, and drink, and possibly a mid-market restaurant frequently requested in the community survey.
- 5) Mall Enhancements - Initiate an interim improvement programs for the Commons Mall as part of the "Benches & Banners" program. The goal is to activate the Fourth and Washington Street frontages. Specifically this should include signage that increases the visibility of key tenants

CED Development Program										
Scenarios		Commercial sf*	Adult Education sf	Arts & Culture sf	Residential sf	Residential Units	Hotel sf	Hotel Keys	Office sf	Parking Garage Spaces
Tier 1										
CM Parking Lot North		10,000					75,000	120		
Commons Mall			10,000 a							
City Parking Lot		15,000								370 d
Washington Street		1,500 b			1,000 b	5				
Tier 2										
Sports Complex		Multiple playing fields for a variety of sports with support facilities such as concessions and stands.								
Washington Street		2,500 b			10,000 b	5				
Tier 3										
Post Office		30,000			95,000	60				120 e
Washington Street		1,500 b			10,000 b	5				
Tier 4										
CM Parking Lot South		15,000			48,000	24				240 d
Commons Mall	C1	100,000		120,000					40,000	
Commons Mall	C2	100,000	70,000 a	40,000 c					40,000	
Washington Street		1,500 b			10,000 b	5				
Total	C1	177,000	10,000	120,000	174,000	104	75,000	120	40,000	730
Total	C2	177,000	80,000	40,000	174,000	104	75,000	120	40,000	730
Notes:										
* Commercial includes restaurants, clubs, and retail.										
a Scenario C1 keeps small satellite Adult Education and C2 expands part of the redefined eastern Commons Mall block.										
b Ongoing reinforcement program targeting ground floor retail and loft style conversions.										
c Scenario C2 retains the Commons as part of the redefinition of the eastern Commons Mall block.										
d Development of new parking structure supplements surface parking spaces lost due to development.										
e Parking provided under building.										
CM = Commons Mall										
sf = square feet										

Ongoing Development and Redefinition

The blocks surrounding the Fourth and Washington intersection include a diverse range of dining, entertainment, and retail establishments. Reinforcement programs are critical to generating an atmosphere of "fun and food at Fourth and Washington Streets". The retail and entertainment opportunity in this area will be increased by the addition of commercial space on the northern and eastern fronts of the Commons Mall. Reinforcement activities should be focused on supporting existing retail, encouraging the transition of first floor space from service to retail where possible, and the introduction of quality housing in underutilized upper floors.

- (theater and restaurant) and façade animation (temporary art installation, lighting display).
- 6) Adult Education - Open a satellite campus for adult education programs in the downtown that utilizes 5,000 to 10,000 square feet for classrooms. Adult education, including advanced degree programs, should be accessible to Downtown employees as well as other segments of the community. Long-term planning should be done to determine scope and location for permanent adult education facilities.

